From: Roderick Ferguson
To: HSSframework
Subject: 2014-2015 History-Social Science Framework Update, FAIR Education Act
Date: Monday, November 24, 2014 4:03:10 PM

Dear Co-Chairs Honig and McTygue:

Since the passage of the FAIR Education Act (SB 48, Leno) in 2011, many Californians and scholars from around the nation have worked tirelessly to ensure that the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals and people with disabilities are fairly represented in history and social studies lessons. Indeed, my own work has attempted to show how black LGBT persons in particular have contributed to political, cultural, and intellectual life within the U.S.

The representation and contribution of LGBT individuals must be accurate and inclusive to truly bring the History-Social Science Framework into compliance with the law. In my perspective as a scholar of black lgbt history and culture, however, the current draft of the History-Social Science Framework under review by the Instructional Quality Commission does not meet SB 48's requirements or its intention and further tokenizes the LGBT community. The current draft only includes references to two white gay men, Harvey Milk and Cleve Jones. To comply with SB 48, the framework should also include lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Americans. I also believe that the framework's LGBT inclusion requires diverse portrayals, particularly LGBT people of color, to accurately reflect California and U.S. history and prepare students to live in a diverse world. The framework needs more robust coverage of diverse LGBT people and historical events in order to provide local districts and classroom teachers with sufficient guidance about historically accurate and age-appropriate content to include throughout elementary school, middle school, and high school.

According to the state's Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content, "In addition to providing positive school experiences and encouraging students' aspirations, instructional materials should reflect a pluralistic, multicultural society composed of unique individuals. The Education Code sections referenced in this document are intended to help end stereotyping in instructional materials by showing diverse people in positive roles contributing to society." Under the authority of Education Code Sections 50501, 60040(b), and 60044(a), "The standards promote the individual development and self-esteem of each student, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity…Persons of gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientation, or transgender identity, should be depicted in the same range of socio-economic settings as are people of other sexual orientations and gender identities." Moreover, the social content standards state that: "The standards project the cultural diversity of society; instill in each child a sense of pride in his or her heritage; develop a feeling of self-worth related to equality of opportunity; eradicate the roots of prejudice; and thereby encourage the optimal individual development of each student." Thus, it is essential for LGBT students of color to see other LGBT people of color portrayed in history. It would not be sufficient to only include white LGBT people. Moreover, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students need to learn about other lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in history, not just gay men.

To provide for robust and comprehensive inclusion, I endorse the recommended changes in *Making the Framework FAIR*, a report submitted to IQC by the Committee on LGBT History, an affiliated group of the American Historical Association. The report was developed by 20 of the country's leading scholars of LGBT history and they produced scholarship-supported recommendations with suggested resources for teachers.

Specifically, I call for the inclusion of the following as detailed in *Making the Framework FAIR*:

1. Grade 2: Diverse LGBT families in the context of understanding family diversity as a contemporary and historical reality

2. Grade 8: Alternative family structures including same-sex relationships within enslaved communities and the changes brought by Reconstruction, in the context of other fundamental transformations related to 19th-century urbanization and industrialization

3. Grade 11: Gender and sexual diversity in the Harlem Renaissance and Bayard Rustin's role in the African American civil rights movement

The goal of the FAIR Education Act is to provide California students with a full and accurate understanding of the role of LGBT Americans in our history and promote an atmosphere of safety and respect in California schools. I strongly support this goal. Should you have any questions regarding my recommendation for full implementation of the FAIR Education Act in the History-Social Science Framework, please contact me at rfergus@uic.edu.

Sincerely,

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